

stabilizing gas selected from the group consisting of  $N_2$ ,  $O_2$ ,  $O_3$ ,  $NO$ , and  $N_2O$ .

42. (new) A method of fabricating a semiconductor device comprising:

depositing an oxygen-deficient dielectric film having a dielectric constant of at least about 25 over an underlying layer;

subjecting the dielectric film to a wet oxidation with steam provided by heating a mixture of hydrogen and oxygen gases in a rapid thermal process chamber at a temperature of at least about  $450^\circ C$  and for a duration which increases the oxygen content of the dielectric film, the steam being provided by a catalytic system; and

subjecting the dielectric film to a heat treatment in an ambient comprising a stabilizing gas selected from the group consisting of  $N_2$ ,  $O_2$ ,  $O_3$ ,  $NO$ , and  $N_2O$ .

43. (new) A method of fabricating a semiconductor device comprising:

depositing an oxygen-deficient dielectric film having a dielectric constant of at least about 25 over an underlying layer;

subjecting the dielectric film to a wet oxidation with steam provided by heating a mixture of hydrogen and oxygen gases in a rapid thermal process chamber at a temperature of at least about  $450^\circ C$  and for a duration which increases the oxygen content of the dielectric film, the steam being provided by a pyrogenic system; and

subjecting the dielectric film to a heat treatment in an ambient comprising a stabilizing gas selected from the group consisting of  $N_2$ ,  $O_2$ ,  $O_3$ ,  $NO$ , and  $N_2O$ .

44. (new) A method of fabricating a semiconductor device comprising:

depositing an oxygen-deficient dielectric film having a dielectric constant of at least about 25 over an underlying layer;

F27  
E1  
WML  
subjecting the dielectric film to a wet oxidation with steam provided by heating a mixture of hydrogen and oxygen gases in a rapid thermal process chamber at a temperature of at least about 450 °C and for a duration which increases the oxygen content of the dielectric film, the steam being provided by a bubbled water vapor system; and

subjecting the dielectric film to a heat treatment in an ambient comprising a stabilizing gas selected from the group consisting of N<sub>2</sub>, O<sub>2</sub>, O<sub>3</sub>, NO, and N<sub>2</sub>O.

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✓  
Please cancel claim 6.

Please rewrite claim 8 as shown in the Replacement Claims:

REPLACEMENT CLAIMS

8. (four times amended) A method of fabricating a semiconductor device

SUB  
F1 } comprising:

depositing an oxygen-deficient dielectric film having a dielectric constant of at least about 25 over an underlying layer;

E2  
subjecting the dielectric film to a wet oxidation with steam provided by heating a mixture of hydrogen and oxygen gases in a rapid thermal process chamber at a temperature of at least about 450 °C and for a duration which increases the oxygen content of the dielectric film, wherein the ratio of hydrogen to oxygen gases in the mixture is in the range of about 0.1 to about 0.8; and

subjecting the dielectric film to a heat treatment in an ambient comprising a stabilizing gas selected from the group consisting of N<sub>2</sub>, O<sub>2</sub>, O<sub>3</sub>, NO, and N<sub>2</sub>O.